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Navy Medicine Ambassadors Make an Impact in the 'Sooner' State

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By Steve Van Der Werff, U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Public Affairs



L-R, Navy Medicine ambassadors Capt. Alison Eagleton, Lt. Cmdr. Randal Herbel and Lt. Cheryl West discuss the Navy Medicine mission at the Oklahoma State Fair.

With a goal of raising awareness about Navy Medicine's mission, Navy Medicine ambassadors traveled to the 'Sooner' state during [Oklahoma City \(OKC\) Navy Week](#), Sept. 21-27.

Capt. Alison Eagleton, reserve affairs officer, Medical Corps, and Lt. Cheryl West, Nurse Corps, led a group of Navy Medicine personnel from the local Expeditionary Medical Facility detachment.

The Navy Medicine ambassadors interacted with local community members to foster ties and share information about the Navy Medicine mission. Throughout the week, they discussed what they do in the Navy and how they ensure the medical readiness of Sailors, Marines and their families. They also shared personal experiences about their careers in Navy Medicine.



Cmdr. Randal Herbel tells a group of school children how his father's Navy service inspired him to join the Navy.

OKC Navy Week was an opportunity to demonstrate how Navy Medicine provides world-class care to Sailors, Marines and their families around the world.

"Health, fitness and medicine are a part of people's everyday life; learning how Navy Medicine ensures the medical readiness of our Sailors and Marines creates a connection because it is directly applicable to their lives," said West. "The Navy is made up of individuals each with their own journey and story to tell. I was proud to represent Navy Medicine and tell my story."

While visiting several of the local schools the ambassadors discussed Navy service and other career opportunities. When the ambassadors showed how to use a battlefield stretcher and heavy-field medical pack, the curiosity levels of the children were immediately raised. They were more than happy to engage the ambassadors and ask detailed questions.



Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Peggy Dodson, left, and Lt. Cheryl West teach students how to use a battlefield stretcher.

Teachers and parents said the interactive nature of the school visits provided a comfortable environment where the ambassadors were approachable, engaging, and the information enriching.

“Growing up in a town of 160 people here in the great state of Oklahoma I think it’s important for folks to hear from the Navy. When I joined, I had no idea what I was getting myself into, but there really are a lot of parallels between a small town and Navy Medicine. There is a deep sense of commitment to take care of each other, to help others, to work hard and to do what is right. I had no difficulty embracing those principles,” said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class (SW/AW/FMF) Peggy Dodson.

When they weren’t visiting local schools, the ambassadors visited a children’s rehabilitation center to meet patients and hand out Navy ball caps.



L-R, Capt. Alison Eagleton, Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Joel Negranza, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Donald Kern, Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Bradley Murphy and Capt. Charles Pasque visit patients at The Children's Center Rehabilitation Hospital.

Several ambassadors joined other Sailors to build a house during a Habitat for Humanity community relations project.

Each day Navy Medicine ambassadors engaged the public at the Oklahoma State Fair, alongside Navy's Science Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) interactive displays, and Navy divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 1 (MDSU-1).

Although the Navy has a sizeable presence at Tinker Air Force Base, the people of OKC were grateful to host Sailors from outside of the area because of their diverse backgrounds and experiences, which gave the community a lasting impression of Navy Medicine and its worldwide mission.

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